

1419992 (Migration) [2015] AATA 3089 (16 July 2015)

DECISION RECORD

DIVISION: Migration & Refugee Division

APPLICANT: Miss Yen-Ling Kuo

CASE NUMBER: 1419992

DIBP REFERENCE(S): BCC2014/306719

MEMBER: Suzanne Carlton

DATE: 16 July 2015

PLACE OF DECISION: Adelaide

DECISION: The Tribunal remits the application for a Partner (Temporary) (Class UK) visa, with the direction that the applicant meets the following criteria for a Subclass 820 (Partner (Temporary)) visa:

- cl.820.211 of Schedule 2 to the Regulations;
- cl.820.221 of Schedule 2 to the Regulations; and
- r.2.03A.

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Statement made on 16 July 2015 at
2:54pm

STATEMENT OF DECISION AND REASONS

APPLICATION FOR REVIEW

1. This is an application for review of a decision of a delegate of the Minister for Immigration on 21 November 2014 to refuse to grant the applicant a Partner (Temporary) (Class UK) visa under s.65 of the *Migration Act 1958* (the Act).
2. The applicant applied for the visa on 1 February 2014 on the basis of her relationship with her sponsor. At that time, Class UK contained only one subclass: Subclass 820 (Partner (Temporary)). The criteria for the grant of this visa are set out in Part 820 of Schedule 2 to the Migration Regulations 1994 (the Regulations). The primary criteria must be satisfied by at least one applicant. Other members of the family unit, if any, who are applicants for the visa need satisfy only the secondary criteria.
3. The delegate refused to grant the visa on the basis that the visa applicant did not satisfy cl.820.211 because he was not satisfied that the parties had been in a genuine and continuing de facto relationship for the 12 months prior to the visa application's lodgement.
4. The applicant was represented in relation to the review by her registered migration agent.
5. For the following reasons, the Tribunal has concluded that the matter should be remitted for reconsideration.

CONSIDERATION OF CLAIMS AND EVIDENCE

6. The applicant is a 28-year old Taiwanese woman who initially came to Australia in 2011 as the holder of a Working holiday visa valid for one year. She applied for and was granted a second Working Holiday visa valid to October 2013. Prior to the expiration of that visa, she applied for a student visa, which was granted in late October 2013. That visa is valid until November this year.
7. The sponsor is a 29-year old man from Hong Kong. He initially came to Australia on a student visa but in December 2013, he became a permanent resident.
8. The parties claim to have met at their mutual work in early 2012. By May 2012 they had moved in together at rented premises in West Croydon. In October 2012 the two moved to rented premises in Brompton, where they lived for a year before moving to rented premises in Woodville Gardens.
9. They opened a joint bank account in August 2013. Later that month, they travelled overseas together, visiting their respective families.
10. They moved to their current home in Edwardstown in March 2013.
11. This application was lodged on 1 February 2014.
12. The issue in the present case is whether, at the time of application, the applicant had been in a de facto relationship with the sponsor for at least 12 months, and whether, at the time of application, the relationship is genuine and continuing.

SPOUSE/DE FACTO (cl.820.211(2)(a), (3)(e), (4)(e), (5)(e), (6)(d), cl.820.221)

WHETHER THE PARTIES ARE IN A SPOUSE OR DE FACTO RELATIONSHIP

13. Clause 820.211(2)(d) and 820.221 require that at the time the visa application was made, and at the time of this decision, the applicant is the spouse or de facto partner of an Australian citizen or Australian permanent resident or an eligible New Zealand citizen. In the present case the applicant claims to be the de facto partner of the sponsor who is an Australian permanent resident.

ARE THE PARTIES IN A DE FACTO RELATIONSHIP?

14. 'De facto partner' is defined in s.5CB of the Act and provides that a person is in a de facto relationship with another person to whom they are not married if they have a mutual commitment to a shared life to the exclusion of all others, the relationship is genuine and continuing, the couple live together, or do not live separately and apart on a permanent basis, and the couple are not related by family: s.5CB(2).
15. In forming an opinion whether they are in a de facto relationship consideration must be given to all of the circumstances of the relationship. This includes evidence of the financial and social aspects and the nature of the parties' household and their commitment to each other as set out in r.1.09A(3) which is attached to this decision.
16. The Tribunal has had regard to the evidence provided relating to the financial aspects of the relationship, including joint ownership of assets, and joint liabilities; the extent of any pooling of financial resources, any legal obligations owed to the other party; and any sharing of day-to-day household expenses.
17. The Tribunal notes the new evidence provided that the parties have entered into several joint tenancy agreements in relation to various properties since May 2012 and this has been evidenced by joint tenancy agreements and rent payment records. They opened a joint bank account in August 2013 and have purchased a car together and jointly paid for travel.
18. The Tribunal has had regard to the evidence provided relating to the nature of the parties' household, including any joint responsibility for the care and support of children, the parties' living arrangements; and any sharing of housework.
19. The parties have indicated that they cook together and jointly cared for their dog.
20. The Tribunal has had regard to the evidence provided relating to the social aspects of the relationship, including whether the parties represent themselves to other people as being married to each other; the opinion of friends and acquaintances about the nature of the relationship; and any basis on which the persons plan and undertake joint social activities.
21. The parties have provided a significant amount of new evidence relating to the social recognition of their relationship, including by their employer, the applicant's parents, the sponsor's sister, and regular customers at the restaurant where they work. The parties have undertaken travel together, including meeting each other's families overseas. Friends and family have also visited them here.
22. The Tribunal has had regard to the evidence provided relating to the nature of persons' commitment to each other, including the duration of the relationship; the length of time they have lived together; the degree of companionship and emotional support they draw from each other; and whether they see the relationship as long-term.

23. Statements by the parties' employer and regular customers at the restaurant where they work indicate knowledge of the de facto nature of the relationship since mid to late 2012. On the evidence, it is apparent that the parties have been in a relationship since 2012 and have lived together since that time. Without the statements provided by family and friends, the social media and photographic evidence, the other documentary evidence would tend to suggest that the relationship only became a de facto one in late 2013. However, based on the additional evidence of family and friends and social media, I accept that the parties had been in a de facto relationship for at least 12 months prior to making the application for the visa in February 2014.
24. I am satisfied that the parties have evidenced a mutual commitment to shared life to the exclusion of others; a genuine and continuing relationship; and that they live together.
25. On the basis of the above the Tribunal is satisfied that the requirements of s.5CB(2) are met at the time of application and decision.
26. Therefore the applicant meets cl.820.211(2)(a) and cl.820.221.

ARE THE ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR A DE FACTO RELATIONSHIP MET?

27. Persons claiming to be in a de facto relationship for a partner visa must also meet the additional criteria in r.2.03A. These are: that the couple are both at least 18 years of age; and with limited exceptions, that the applicant has been in the de facto relationship for at least the period of 12 months ending immediately before the date of the application, unless he or she can establish compelling and compassionate circumstances for the grant of the visa. The requirement that the relationship existed for 12 months prior to the application does not apply in certain circumstances where the sponsor is or was a humanitarian visa holder, or for applications made on or after 9 November 2009, where the de facto relationship has been registered under a relevant State or Territory law: r.2.03(4), (5).
28. The Tribunal is satisfied that at the time of application, both parties were over the age of 18 and for the reasons set out above, that the relationship had existed for at least 12 months before the visa application was made.
29. For these reasons the Tribunal is satisfied that the applicant meets the additional criteria prescribed in r.2.03A.
30. Given the findings above, the appropriate course is to remit the application for the visa to the Minister to consider the remaining criteria for a Subclass 820 visa.

DECISION

31. The Tribunal remits the application for a Partner (Temporary) (Class UK) visa, with the direction that the applicant meets the following criteria for a Subclass 820 (Partner (Temporary)) visa:
 - cl.820.211 of Schedule 2 to the Regulations;
 - cl.820.221 of Schedule 2 to the Regulations; and
 - r.2.03A.

Suzanne Carlton
Member

ATTACHMENT - EXTRACT FROM MIGRATION REGULATIONS 1994

1.09A DE FACTO PARTNER AND DE FACTO RELATIONSHIP

- (1) For subsection 5CB (3) of the Act, this regulation sets out arrangements for the purpose of determining whether 1 or more of the conditions in paragraphs 5CB (2) (a), (b), (c) and (d) of the Act exist.

Note 1 See regulation 2.03A for the prescribed criteria applicable to de facto partners.

Note 2 The effect of subsection 5CB (1) of the Act is that a person is the de facto partner of another person (whether of the same sex or a different sex) if the person is in a de facto relationship with the other person.

Subsection 5CB (2) sets out conditions about whether a de facto relationship exists, and subsection 5CB (3) permits the regulations to make arrangements in relation to the determination of whether 1 or more of those conditions exist.

- (2) If the Minister is considering an application for:
- (a) a Partner (Migrant) (Class BC) visa; or
 - (b) a Partner (Provisional) (Class UF) visa; or
 - (c) a Partner (Residence) (Class BS) visa; or
 - (d) a Partner (Temporary) (Class UK) visa;

the Minister must consider all of the circumstances of the relationship, including the matters set out in subregulation (3).

- (3) The matters for subregulation (2) are:
- (a) the financial aspects of the relationship, including:
 - (i) any joint ownership of real estate or other major assets; and
 - (ii) any joint liabilities; and
 - (iii) the extent of any pooling of financial resources, especially in relation to major financial commitments; and
 - (iv) whether one person in the relationship owes any legal obligation in respect of the other; and
 - (v) the basis of any sharing of day to day household expenses; and
 - (b) the nature of the household, including:
 - (i) any joint responsibility for the care and support of children; and
 - (ii) the living arrangements of the persons; and
 - (iii) any sharing of the responsibility for housework; and
 - (c) the social aspects of the relationship, including:
 - (i) whether the persons represent themselves to other people as being in a de facto relationship with each other; and
 - (ii) the opinion of the persons' friends and acquaintances about the nature of the relationship; and
 - (iii) any basis on which the persons plan and undertake joint social activities; and
 - (d) the nature of the persons' commitment to each other, including:
 - (i) the duration of the relationship; and
 - (ii) the length of time during which the persons have lived together; and
 - (iii) the degree of companionship and emotional support that the persons draw from each other; and
 - (iv) whether the persons see the relationship as a long term one.
- (4) If the Minister is considering an application for a visa of a class other than a class mentioned in subregulation (2), the Minister may consider any of the circumstances mentioned in subregulation (3).